Atrocities on Indian Prisoners

†1698. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in Dainik Bhaskar dated the 1st September, 2002 under the caption "Julmon Ne Pagalpan ki Had Tak Pahunchaya Bhartiya Qaidiyon Ko";

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts Government are making for release of these prisoners?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c) Government are aware of ill treatment meted out to Indian prisoners detained in Pakistani jails. Prisoners are released in accordance with established procedure, involving consular identification and nationality verification, after their jail sentence is over. Government have consistently taken up the matter of their early release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan.

Prime Minister's U.S. visit

1699. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister visited the United States in early September to join the Commemoration of the September 11, tragedy;

(b) whether he had a special meeting with President Bush;

(c) if so, the issues which surfaced in the bilateral discussion;

(d) whether President Bush sought India's support to his efforts to oust Saddam Hussain regime from Iraq and the Gulf area; and

(e) if so, the stand taken by the Prime Minister in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) During his visit to New York for the United Nations General Assembly from 9-17 September 2002, the Prime Minister attended the commemoration of the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

September 11 tragedy and had a meeting with U.S. President George W. Bush on 12 September 2002.

(c) The two sides discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and international issues.

(d) The situation with regard to Iraq came up in the meeting between the Prime Minister and the U.S. President. The discussions did not relate to India's role therein.

(e) In New York, Prime Minister had publicly stated that India has vital strategic interests in Gulf and a large Indian diaspora lives and works in the region; India has had a historical relationship with Iraq; at the same time, we fully understand the international community's desire to see the relevant UN resolutions on Weapons of Mass Destruction complied with fully; and, that we believe that the sanctions against Iraq should be lifted in tandem with full and effective compliance by Iraq.

Debarring former Punjab Chief Minister from US visa

1700. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.S. Government has declared the former Punjab Chief Minister, Rajinder Kaur Bhattal to be permanently ineligible to receive a U.S. visa;

(b) if so, the facts and circumstances leading to the decision; and

(c) Government's reaction in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Government has seen the media reports in this regard. However, Government has received no official information from the US side on this matter.

(b) The U.S. law prohibits the disclosure of information in individual visa cases.

(c) Does not arise.

Terrorist training camps in Bangladesh

1701. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has handed over a list of 99 terrorist camps operating in Bangladesh where anti-Indian terrorists are trained;